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MUSINGS IN VERSE.

R. F. KILVERT.

2/-

Bt. from Blackwell

280 f. 1858

MUSINGS IN VERSE.

Musings in Verse.

BY

ROBERT FRANCIS KILVERT, M.A.,
Late Vicar of Bredwardine, Herefordshire.

[NOT PUBLISHED.]

OXFORD:
EDWARD C. ALDEN, 35 CORN-MARKET STREET.
MDCCCLXXXII.

"The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude."

Wordsworth.

THIS little volume would most probably never have seen the light in its present form but for a desire expressed by the author, shortly before his death, to make at some future time a selection from his poems for publication. Removed, as he was, after an illness of only a few days, it was found that no pieces had been especially set apart by him for that purpose; and those which now appear had not received such correction as further and more mature thought might have suggested to him.

If any record is looked for regarding the author himself, it will be found in the hearts of those who valued and loved him, rather than in an elaborate obituary.

For the information of strangers who may open these pages it may be enough to say, that his life, both before and throughout his ministry, was passed in quiet and retired country places where "he could see God's blessings spring out of his mother earth, and eat his bread in peace and privacy." Thus his musings were continually amidst the objects of nature, in which he had an intense delight.

After taking orders, and serving as Curate of his father's parish in Wiltshire for a short time, he spent seven or eight very happy years as Curate of Clyro in Radnorshire; then for a short time he was Vicar of St. Harmon's in the same county, until finally he became Vicar of Bredwardine near Hereford. In each of these places he was happy in making many friends among all classes, especially among the poor, very many of whom repaid his earnest ministrations with affection and love. But that which marked his ministerial course more than anything else was his devoted daily attendance at

the schools of his several parishes. He possessed a happy faculty, and felt an unceasing delight in teaching young children. There was something in his manner with them and in his way of speaking to them which had an attraction almost magnetic. It was so wherever he went. He was most tender in his ministrations to them in sickness, and nothing touched him so deeply as officiating at the funeral of a little child.

Thus exercising his ministry with acceptance and effect during fourteen or fifteen years, he was, within five weeks after his marriage, suddenly called away from his deeply sorrowing and still fondly regretful friends; lost to them for a while, "until the day dawn and the shadows flee away."

October, 1881.

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A Pageant.

I.

WHOEVER seeks with humble soul shall find
A world of wonder on his vision rise,
And through the palace of a holy mind
Shall pageants gorgeous pass before his eyes;
And by Heaven's alchemy, if he be wise,
The world, to some so common and so drear,
To him transmuted is to Paradise;
Old things are new, and common things grow dear.
And thus of late I watched the Pageant of the Year.

II.

Her fair head garlanded with apple-bloom,
First danced the Spring in raiment freshly green,
And round her stirred a waft of wild perfume
From flowers that sprang to welcome their young queen,
Enamelling with cowslip gold the sheen
Of emerald meadows; as through forest aisles
In tumult sweet and orchard crofts between,
The birds, her minstrels, sang—and still by whiles
Her changeful face was crossed by April tears and smiles.

III.

Then followed Summer with a slower tread,
Loose-robed and glowing with a sun-flushed face;
The while she bore her stately matron head
Crowned with full roses and maturer grace,
As through the sultry noon with silent pace
Her steps by shallowing brooks she still did bend
To bathe her dusty feet in some cool place,
And sleep until the high sun should descend,
And the long glowing day at length come to an end.

IV.

Next, Autumn laughing in a harvest wain,
Rich with her store of russet red and gold,
Crowned with ripe fruits, cornflowers and bearded grain,
And revelling in plenty manifold
(More than her overflowing barns would hold)
Garnered, amid the songs of Harvest Home
From nut-brown maids and swarthy reapers bold;
For the last load with shouting had come home,
And over the last stack was raised its golden dome.

V.

And last crept Winter holly-crowned and old,
Snowy his hair, his beard of icicles;
And round about him all the air grew cold,
As of the Old Year he tolled out the knells;
And all the land was filled with Christmas bells,
And children's carols simply sweet and wild;—
(That sound which to the heart so gladly tells
That we to God for aye are reconciled;)
And in his aged arms he bore a Holy Child.

VI.

So passéd by the Pageant of the Year;
And each fair season hath its music sweet,
Each hath its beauty, its own smile or tear,
And each in turn and time is good and meet,
As each doth homage pay before the feet
Of God—before Whose Throne in order due
They march perpetual, in their rounds complete,
Since first they seemed in His most holy view
Good, and He bade them still their ceaseless course pursue.

Friendship.

IN that great vision which was given
Of angels passing to and fro,
No fairer spirit came from heaven
To brighten this dark world below,
Than thou, blest angel in disguise,
Sweet Friendship, with the human eyes.

Sweet Friendship; dear and holy name!
For Love's twin sister thou dost seem;

And surely, hand in hand ye came,
Transfigured in that glorious dream;
Since first this troubled world began,
God's brightest messengers to man.

Oh, as I tread this world's hard ways,
May such a gift from God be mine:
One brave to blame, and proud to praise,
Changeless alike through shade and shine;
A friend to love me still the same,
Amid the glory or the shame.

When Poverty's chill tempests lower,
One friendly cloak shall keep us warm;

To part us slander hath no power,
And side by side we 'll face the storm;
Round us the baffled world may roar,
But we are friends for evermore.

If aught that I have said or done
Should draw the world's acclaim to me,
I list for one dear voice alone,
And turn from all the crowd to thee;
The only guerdon that I prize,
One proud glance from thy loving eyes.

When bowed my face with shame and dread,
Forsaken in the dust I lie,

A hand on my dishonoured head
Is rested, oh how tenderly!
And to my look those kind eyes tell
Love is, like God, unchangeable.

Lost.

THE weary day drags round again,
The saddest, darkest of the year,
Still numb with sense of stunning pain,
And black with doom, and chilled with fear:
The day that brought the dread report
Of sorrow—sorrow—on the sea,—
A ship that ne'er would reach her port,
A love that ne'er would come to me.

From combe to combe the wood-dove's note
Croons moaning through the budding trees,
From combe to combe a kindred throat
Croons back its love-lorn messages.
But I go lonely and return,
As night and day I seek my love,
And answerless through silence yearn
With moanings of the love-lorn dove.

The sun he rises from the sea,
The sun he sets upon the plain;
But my true love is lost to me,—
Lost, lost, and ne'er will come again.
The sun he sets upon the plain,
The sun he rises from the sea;

But neither eve nor morn again
Will bring my true love back to me.

I turn mine eyes unto the land:
Mine eyes so loathe the dimpling wave
That writes in mockery on the sand,—
"Each billow heaves a sailor's grave."
I turn mine eyes unto the sea,
With faint wild hope my heartstrings burn
That some tide yet may bring to me
The love that never will return.

Oh, happy, happy sails that fly
Bound homeward up the narrow sea,
Their weary voyage drawing nigh

The haven where they fain would be.

There's not a lad upon the deck

But feels e'en now his true love's kiss,

Her dear arms clasped about his neck,

Her warm cheek softly laid to his.

Oh, happy they whose shouts arise

To greet thy gallant ship afar;

They crowd the port, they shade their eyes

Strained eager on the harbour bar.

The live ship sweeps with rushing wings,

She rounds the headland with a cheer,

True love to lover fondly clings;

And I alone stand weeping here.

They tell me of a happy land,
A land of peace beyond the sea,
Where my true love doth waiting stand,
And till I come doth watch for me.
And when I think thereon, the sun
Colours with hope the softening rain,
That we when this sad dream is done
May wake and find our lost again.

Little Things.

IT seemed a little thing to play
With words and glances' meaning,
To steal a trusting heart away
All happy and unweening.
Yet when the summer hours flew by,
And those two souls were parted,
One smiling heaved a passing sigh,
But one was broken-hearted.

It seemed a little thing to tell
Some tale best left unspoken,
Or hold a silence audible
When silence should be broken:
But, oh! the thoughtless, reckless speech,
The whispered hint set flying;
For wounded now beyond our reach,
Some good name lies a-dying.

It seemed a little thing to speak
A hot word, hasty, bitter,
To mark the blood flush to the cheek,
And eyes with tears a-glitter:
But, oh! in some poor tender heart
Those random shafts will quiver,

And splinters of that barbéd dart
May rankle there for ever.

It seemed a little thing to say
A kindly word at parting,
Too small a thing on any day
To set such tears a-starting:
But had you seen the lone heart swell,
And those sad eyes quick lighted
With grateful love, as those tears fell,
You had been well requited.

Oh, little things! if such there are,
How vast a power is given
To you to keep our spirits far—

Or draw them nearer Heaven.

Around our daily path they lie,
Those stones so gray and olden,
That Heaven's glorious alchemy
Can turn to jewels golden.

How small a thing has power to bless
With tender influence moving,
To give an hour's pure happiness
To simple souls and loving!
The friendly word that may beguile
A day of pain or sorrow,
The sunshine of a kindly smile,
That points a bright to-morrow.

There's not a flower so small and shy
Along the wayside blowing,
But has a meaning in its eye
And teaches in its growing.
Each bird that sings, the rustling trees,
All simple things and lowly,
Bring sweet and secret messages
Where'er the heart is holy.

Forgive and Forget.

HE.

SINCE passion's tempest drowned the gleam of
love's pure guiding star,
My footsteps truant from thy side have wandered wild
and far;
Now humbly to thy heart's wide door I turn with keen
regret;
Oh, canst thou still forgive, dear love? and canst thou
e'er forget?

If thou couldst know (thou never shalt), yet if thou
couldst but see
How I have suffered for my sin,—my shame,—my
agony,—
How dark the world when on my soul hope's star has
seemed to set,—
I think thou wouldst forgive, dear love, I think thou
wouldst forget.

Oh, I have bowed my pride to-day as ne'er it bowed
before!
Oh, if in vain I now should pray, a suppliant at thy
door!
With unaccustomed softening tears these hard proud
eyes are wet:

Forgive me if thou canst, dear love! and if thou canst,
forget.

If now a hard cold glance should tell that I have prayed
in vain,
Perchance the heart that melts to-day may soften ne'er
again;
My sun hath dipped beneath the wave—the star of
hope hath set,
If thou refuse now to forgive, if thou wilt not forget.

SHE.

And who am I that to thy prayers should dare to
answer, "Nay"?
And what am I that I should dare to spurn a soul away?

Have *I* not sinned? Do *I* not need to pray with wild
regret,
That One should aye forgive *me* too, that One should
aye forget?

There is a word—have I not heard a Voice that speaks
from Heaven:
"Child of a day, forgive alway, as thou wouldst be for-
given;
"Let not thy bitter wrath endure until the sun be set;
"Forgive, as God forgiveth thee; as He forgets, for-
get"?

When thou wast erring from my side, on many a bitter
day,

One comfort still was left, and that one comfort was—
to pray:
For *thee* I prayed; and canst thou then, whilst still these
eyes are wet,
Fear lest thou shouldst not be forgiven, lest I should
not forget?

Could I reject those bitter tears and that beseeching
look,
I should deserve that God henceforth should blot me
from His book;
I should deserve that on my soul the sun of love
should set,
If I would never more forgive, and never more forget.

Faithful unto Death.

IN Herculaneum town the guard
Was set when day was done;
The Roman sentinel kept ward
And watched the gate alone.
That was a long strange night to him;
And ere day broke his eye was dim.

The city sank to rest that night
In calm serenity,

But ghastly strange the morning light
  Dawned on the land and sea;
For Death waved dark his wings of doom,
And swift the town became a tomb.

Trembled the earth with fires of hell,
  The Mount put forth his power;
With silent rain the ashes fell,
  A soft and deadly shower;
And still the soldier held his guard,
And unrelieved kept watch and ward.

Amid the strange unearthly gloom
  A ghastly horror grew,

As o'er the plain the Mount of Doom
  Its awful shadow threw;
For still the rain of ashes fell,
And still watched on the sentinel.

A wail of terror rent the sky
  From that doomed city dim;
The frantic feet that hurried by
  Brought no relief for him;
And oft he turned his listening head,
But heard no warrior's measured tread.

And yet without his captain's word
  The soldier would not go,

Though love of life within him stirred
And pleaded long and low,
And with stern duty in wild strife
Rose faces sweet of child and wife.

The love of life and home cried "Go,"
But duty bade him "Stay;"
Then something whispered, "None will know;"
But one clear voice said "Nay!
"What matter though 'twere known of none?
"And what were life with honour gone?"

But still the storm of ashes flew
And deepened still the gloom,

And round the faithful soldier grew
His silent living tomb;
The ashes spread the warrior's bier,
The ashes built his sepulchre.

It were an easy thing to die
In the wild battle's din;
But to watch Death come creeping nigh,
And nigher still—yet win
That battle with a stedfast smile,
And none to shout or mourn the while!

Faithful to death the warrior stood
In silence and alone;

And many a heart has since o'erflowed
And cried, "'Twas nobly done!"
And still he moves our souls to tears
Who stood on guard a thousand years.

Snow.

SNOW!
Did you say "Snow"?
What did you say?
What 's to-day?
Day of December?
Ay! I remember,
Those years ago.

Why ?.

Why do I sigh ?

If you could know

All that this snow

Makes me remember

Of that December,

Perhaps *you* would sigh !

Well !

I 'll try to tell

How I grew grey

All in one day :

I was young then—

Strong, 'midst strong men ;

Thus it befel.

She ?

How old was she ?

Just seventeen,

My fairy queen—

Sweetest and best;

Now she 's at rest,

Waiting for me !

Wrong ?

Who thinks of wrong ?

She had a lover—

Why not ? all 's over :

All 's right and fair !

Any one *dare*

Hinting at wrong ?

Eve?

'Twas Christmas Eve!

None of us wist—

Gone to her tryst;

But alive home

Ne'er did she come,

That Christmas Eve!

Snow!

Lost in the snow!

Ne'er reached the tryst—

'Wildered in mist.

Why do you weep?

She fell asleep

So long ago.

Deep,

Over her sleep,

Pure as the snow;

Now you will know

How I grew grey

That winter day.

Is the snow deep?

Life's Weather.

MISTY the morning:
Pearl gleams and opal play,
Of life's hot glaring day
Tenderly warning;
But as bird singing
Sweet in the early rime,
Through the heart's childhood prime
High lands are ringing.

Now the dew hoary
Dries from the meadow grass,
And from life's morn doth pass
The first bright glory.
And some, once sainted
In youth's first freshness, soon
'Neath manhood's sultry noon
Stand disenchanted.

Heavily raining,
Thick clouds have blurred the sun,
Childhood and youth are done;
And the lights waning,
One by one dying,
Low in the darkening day,

While o'er the heaving grey,
Sea-mews are crying.

Stormy the weather,
Lurid the sinking sun,
Billow and minute gun
Booming together;
Lightning and thunder,
Souls in the storm and strife,
Hearts in the wreck of life
Riven asunder.

Hark! the wind moaning
Howls through the rigging shrill,
And 'midst the tumult still

Timbers are groaning;
And the sea roaring
Gulfs the dismasted wreck,
Mountain waves o'er the deck
Hungrily pouring.

Till at sun-setting
Bright in the eastern sky
Hope spreads her arch on high,—
Love unforgetting;
And, through the gloaming,
O'er the clouds' purple bar,
Lo! the pure even star,
Beacons us homing.

So, life and weather,
From the first gleam of sun
Till life's wild storms are done,
Change still together;
God's promise keeping,
That on the edge of night,
Heaven shall bend her light
Over our sleeping.

Pandora's Box.

AS bloomed before Eve's curious eyes
The fatal fruit in Paradise,
When, subtly whispering in her ear,
The Tempter's voice wiled sweet and clear;
And round the memory of that day
Cling ruin, grief, and dark dismay:
So round the story of that room
In Epimetheus' house, a gloom

Of sadness rests, and far away
Down Time's dim stream we rue the day
When first—as Father Hesiod sings
To earliest and simplest strings—
Pandora stood, a bride, before
Great Epimetheus' palace door,
And entering, saw the fatal chest
That night and day denied her rest,
Till she its strange contents might see,
And solve the hidden mystery.

In vain the ancient oracle
The doom disastrous might foretell,
That should reward the curious sin,
Of whomsoe'er should look within;

In vain, too, might her lord forbid:
Pandora raised the fatal lid
And found (the Nemesis of sinning)
The prize was poorly worth the winning.
A cloud of ills their wings unfurled,
And blighted half a smiling world;
But as outburst the dismal crew,
And thick and fast the hindmost flew,
A moment, Hope, behind the rest
Lingered within the dungeon-chest,
The falling lid detained her here,
And Hope remained a prisoner.

O, Woman! thou who couldst not see
And leave untouched that fatal tree!

O, Woman! thou who couldst not rest
And leave unoped that fatal chest!
As well in late as ancient story,
Man's chief perplexity and glory!
Though woes through thee did first arrive,
Yet all to thee we must forgive,
For thou art, when those ills appear,
Our best and sweetest comforter;
At thy kind touch our pains are gone,
And half the mischief is undone,
A thousand sorrows are set free,
But we have Hope while we have thee.

Sweet Hope! within this prison cell,
Ordained by Heaven with us to dwell,

And by those blue eyes, smiling fair,
To keep poor mortals from despair;
Teach us to lift our souls on high,
And see blue rifts in yon black sky,
And in our hearts while we live here,
Keep thee, sweet Hope, our prisoner.

The Highest of Women.

SHE who prefers adorned to be
In unadorned simplicity,
And wears that brightest, loveliest dress,
The robe of self-unconsciousness;—
She who is pure as break of day,
Yet merciful to them that stray;
She in whose mind the graces move,
And in her heart the law of love;
So great, she can afford with grace

Cheerful to take the lowest place;
Who in her heart's unselfish health
Unenvying sees another's wealth,
Content with the decree of Heaven,
And freely gives as God hath given;
She whose pure soul is fixed on high,
Yet walks in sweet humility;
Who, on love's service ever bent,
Will spend herself, and still be spent;
Who, ready at each friendly call,
Thinks of herself the last of all,
Or never thinks, nor frets to find
Herself forgot and out of mind;
Remembering all, perhaps by none
Remembered; lone,—yet not alone;

Her prayers and alms-deeds back are shed
In double blessing on her head;
She who seeks comfort in her smart
By comforting each sorrowing heart;
Who shrinks, though her own cause is strong,
From proving others in the wrong;
Too great to bear a grudge, or be
In anger unforgivingly,
Nobly unapt to take offence,
Or keep a wrong in evidence;
Who with high courage still can be
All gentle, sweet, and womanly;
Whose heart is soft with tender ruth,
Yet o'er expedience seeks the truth;
Who climbs the hill of Duty steep;

Who each great charge will faithful keep;
Who walks with those companions three—
Faith, Hope, and Love, full sisterly;
Seeks not, but gathers none the less,
The wayside flowers of happiness;
She who will never be beguiled,
By love of husband, friend, or child,
From greater claims and higher love,—
Allegiance owed and paid above;
She who is ever seen to be
Most like the maid of Galilee,
And whose pure spirit doth afford
A sweet handmaiden to her Lord;
To her be the amaranth crown assigned,
The noblest of her noble kind!

We wear our Rue with a Difference.

WHEN sweet Ophelia culled her flowers
From garden-beds that summer's day,
And washed them with her tears' wild showers,
And gave them all away;—

Pansies, that lovers' thoughts entwine,
For dear remembrance, rosemary,
Fennel, herbgrace, and columbine,
And the day's golden eye;—

Though her sweet soul was sore distraught,
With sorrow darkened in its prime,
There gleamed a method in her thought,
And reason in her rhyme.

From the sad garden where it grew,
Of those who culled and brought it thence,
Some for pure sorrow wear the rue,
And some for penitence.

And some the bitterest smart have borne,
Which these poor hearts doth search and prove,—
The anguish of heart-tendrils torn
By unrequited love.

And, sweet Ophelia! be it mine
A sharer in thy tears to be,
(Though reason's flickerings dimly shine,)
And wear the rue with thee,

Than reign a partner in the guilt
That no remorse can wash away,
And hear the blood cry, murder-spilt,
For vengeance, day by day.

Since none this weary world may tread,
And long escape the common doom,
Since every eye some tears must shed,
Some grief each life must gloom;

Let it be mine to seek relief
In comforting another's moan,
To wear the rue for others' grief
As well as for mine own.

Noblesse Oblige.

I.

"MY foresire rode at Senlac Field;
I take the van:
The post of danger I 'll not yield
To any man.

"My scutcheon owns no blot or bar:
Who says me nay?
Honour shines, the guiding star:
I lead the way.

"We who boast our claim to-day,
Noblest to be,
Let us show the rest the way;
Now follow me!"

* * * *

"Lift him gently. Is he gone?"
"God grant, No!
England 's lost her noblest son,
If he should go."

"Here it is! a lance's gash!
He bore the brunt,
All the way his sabre's flash
Fifty yards in front."

"Hush! he speaks!" "What does he say?"

"Don't think of me,

Men! this is a glorious day;

England is free!

"Save the lives of others, men!

Mine ebbs fast;

When you 've helped the others, then—

My turn last."

II.

THE morning wind was in her hair, the sunlight
on her brow,
That never was upreared more high and haughtily
than now;
A scornful light shone in her eye, a spirit naught could
tame;
For her, death bore no terror, and the scaffold brought
no shame.

She cast upon the yelling crowd a glance of high
disdain!
She gave not to their gloating eyes one trace of shame
or pain.
Her lofty soul, unfettered, on the scaffold scorned to stay;
Beyond the yelling herd her calm proud look gazed
far away.
One word of stern contempt she deigned, her voice
thrilled clear and high:
"Dogs! ye would shriek for dread of death, but WE
know how to die!"
And while the proud smile curled her lip, she bent
still haughtily,
Swift flashed the axe, her eye quailed not, the tameless
soul was free.

III.

THE gallant ship was on a rock amid the stormy sea;

The captain's voice rose o'er the din, and none so brave as he:

"Now, English seamen, stand by me, and show your race to-day;

And he who thinks himself the first, show all the rest the way.

"Now, steady, men; clear all the boats, and get the
women down;
First see each child and woman safe,—you 'll never
let *them* drown!"
He had a wife and child at home, who waked and
prayed for him,
And for a moment, as he spoke, the Captain's eye
grew dim.

"Come, Captain, quick! there 's room for one! the
ship is sinking fast!"
"No, here 's another man to go; and I shall leave
her last:
Quick, now push off; good bye, God bless you! tell
them all at home!"

And o'er good ship and gallant heart plunged high
the wild sea foam.

IV.

SERENE, alone, she took her stand
Upon the arena's blood-drenched sand,
And savage shouts roared in her ear
From the vast throng tier above tier;
But heavenward glanced her stedfast eye,
Noble in Faith's simplicity:
"Thou, whom love brought to die for me,
Help Thy poor child to die for Thee!"

Holy Land.

IS this Thy lowly cottage home?
Ah, let me rest a little here
And muse in this poor simple room,
The workshop of the Carpenter.
But silence reigns within the door,
The tools lie resting on the floor.

O take me in the little boat
Across Gennesaret's holy sea,

And teach me, teach me as we float
On the blue deeps of Galilee.
Alas ! I wander here alone,
The fisher and his boat are gone.

O lead me with a loving hand
Upon the Galilean hill,
And show me all the Holy Land
That bears Thy sacred footprints still.
I reach my hand—I call—I hark ;
But round me falls the silent dark.

O let me hear that gentle Voice
Thy loved disciples heard so oft,
And bid my fainting soul rejoice

With words of comfort kind and soft.
I list, but oh ! I list in vain,
And tears scarce stinted rush again.

O round me throw that tender arm
Which Thou around Thy friend didst cast,
To keep me safe from touch of harm
Until the tempter's power be past.
I yearn—I feel for that embrace,
And strive through dark to see Thy Face.

O guide my steps to Calvary,
And lead me to the garden grave,
And where by sad Gethemane
The mountain olives twinkling wave,

And let me hear Thy sad voice say,
"With me awhile, O watch and pray!"

O fill me with Thy Spirit, LORD,
And humble sweet submissive grace,
And teach my heart to use Thy word
While yearning for my Saviour's Face;
That this may sweeten all my moan:
"Father, Thy will, not mine, be done!"

The Foregoing Footstep.

I KNOW a foot before me falls
Along the hard and holy way;
And as I follow day by day,
The Master's voice before me calls.

And as I labour upward still,
At whiles those kindly tones I hear,
The pure sweet accents falling clear
From higher passes of the hill.

Sometimes, beneath His great Cross bound,
I mark where He too fainting fell,
The tears will start, the heart will swell
O'er crimson drops upon the ground.

When lost my way, I grope in vain
And wander, praying for the light,
A Hand is reached from out the night,
And leads me to the path again.

Evensong.

DAY'S closing eye hath shed a tear,
And sweeping through the cedar tree,
In the fresh breeze I seem to hear
The murmuring of the distant sea.

A soft gleam o'er the river steals,
The sunset fades from the red bridge,
But lingering yet the glory dwells
For love upon the upland ridge.

The cushat bids his mate Good night,
And in the oak wood deep and dim
Each sweet bird in the fading light
Is singing his last evening hymn.

The Holy Dove doth silent brood
In peace above the dying day,
And GOD is in the solitude,
And I will go apart and pray.

The evening wind is freshening clear,
  And through the cedar tree
Oft as it sweeps I seem to hear
  The murmur of the sea.

At shut of day
I muse, I pray,
And, LORD, my love confessing,
For mine that be
Beside the sea,
I ask of Thee
Thy blessing.

Whene'er they meet upon the hill,
Or walk beside the shore,
Let Thy Hand be upon them still
And guard them evermore;
That they may prove
Thy boundless love,
Too wide for human telling,

And so them teach

That they may each

In safety reach

Thy dwelling!

The Flower of Slaughterford.

UPON no gentler, lovelier head
Heaven's sunset smile has poured
Since first on thine its love was shed,
Sweet Flower of Slaughterford!
And not a star in all bright heaven
Shines with a purer light
Than those twin stars this springtide even
Which bade that sweet "Good night."

Each bird has closed her sleepy wing,
The darkening woods are still,
The quiet airs no longer bring
The booming of the mill.
The brook that winds to kiss thy feet
Murmurs at fading light
To thee its rippling message sweet,—
"Good night, fair flower, good night!"

The evening mists rise softly wreathed,
The shadows waver long,
And each bright flower has fragrant breathed
Her own sweet evensong.
So to thy softly whispered prayer
An answer falling light

Speaks whispering through the holy air,—
"Good night, dear child, good night!"

The soft wind blowing from the west
Has breathed its evening sigh,
And each flower on its mother's breast
Has closed its dewy eye.
So draw the curtains of thine hair,
And those eyes' starry light
Veil with their silky fringes fair:
"Good night, sweet flower, good night!"

The Pilgrimage.

IT is a strange and solemn thing to mark
How our paths cross each other in this world,
And then diverge for ever. We have come
Out of the spaces of Eternity,
The immeasurable vast, to meet each other,
Brought thither by the Hand and Thought of God,
Who loves, thinks, cares for each, and painfully
Plans every little incident of life

For our advantage, and to give us chance
Of walking with Him in His holy ways,
Of coming back like sheep that have been lost,
Erring and straying from the fold secure
Of the Good Shepherd,—opportunity
Of bringing comfort and sweet sympathy
To those who mourn, to bind up broken hearts,
To look as sadly into those sad eyes
That seek our own, and look, and look, and ask,
Imploring helpless through their gathering tears,
That we will watch one hour and suffer with them
And help to bear the Cross a little way,
And weep with them that weep. Oh, God has given
A power divine to every human spirit
That lives its hour of trial on this earth

Among its fellow-spirits,—a power of love,
A spark of His own nature that pure flame,—
An earnest of a close relationship,
A likeness of the Father in the child,
Through undeveloped lineaments shining forth,—
A pledge, a reminiscence of the land
That we came out from on our pilgrimage,
And whither we return. For though we wander
Out of the way oft in this wilderness,
Our faces still are set toward our home.
So as we journey on our pilgrimage
Through this vast wilderness of mortal life
We cross the path of many travellers,
And stand a single moment face to face
With half a smile perchance, perchance a frown.

Or in GOD'S ordering it so may be
That the two travellers shall walk awhile
As fellow-pilgrims in sweet intercourse
Together, side by side, or hand in hand,
Mounting till noon the highest pitch of life,
Or entering down the slope into the vale
Toward the evening and the setting sun.
But in the strange vicissitudes of life
After the pilgrims have walked side by side
For years, their paths are sundered; they must go
Diverging ways, they cannot choose but go.
There is an influence irresistible
That steals into the life, and draws and draws
As if an angel stood on either side,
And linked an arm insensibly within

The arm of either pilgrim, leading him
Apart down other pathways, or as if
An angel stood, unseen but ever felt,
Upon the old path waving his broad wings
And flaming sword, that none alive may pass.
And so the pilgrims part among the crowd,
Never to meet again on this side Heaven.
They walk in other ways, meet other eyes,
Clasp other hands, but the old influence
Is still at work, and cannot cease; for if
Two souls have touched, though 'twere but for a moment—
The momentary crossing of a path—
Though they should never touch again on earth,
It is the will of God, it is for ever:

And now the time to come can never be
As if that chance-called meeting had not been.

Unsuspected Love.

THE world may pass disdainful by,
And friends may prove unkind;
But waste thereon no envious sigh,
Nor whistle for the wind.
There waits for you a glance as sweet
As king with joy could fill,
For none so lonely but shall meet
With some to love them still.

Though poor and slighted and forgot,
With few to hold you dear,
Nor weep despairing at your lot,
Nor curl a bitter sneer.
In some fond heart you hold a throne
Whereon you reign at will;
Since none can live and mourn alone,
But some will love them still.

O look, believe, it is not meet
To cast such pearls away,
To crush a heart beneath your feet
As it were common clay,—
Some heart, perchance, for years agone
That ached at your sweet will;

For none can live and weep alone,

But some must love them still.

Charity.

THOUGH wealth may fly and youth must go,
Though hearts be sick with striving,
Though locks of gold must turn to snow,
If God give length of living;
Though withered hopes, like Autumn leaves,
Drift down life's fleeting river,
Though Faith should wreck, one anchor holds,
For Love remaineth ever.

When Faith has led her pilgrim up
Unto the gates of Heaven,
And Hope at length hath rendered back
The charge to her was given;
Thou, Charity, companion dear,
From us shalt part, oh! never;
And thou shalt enter Heaven with us,
For Love abideth ever.

The Savoyard.

THE child
Shuddered and shivered in the bitter wind
Snow-laden, howling through the dark damp arch;
Then as the evening gloomed, a keen black frost
Fell on the city, and the child forlorn
Huddled his rags about him and laid down
A thin, dark face, and long, black, curling hair,
Upon a box—a little house
Where lived a dear companion, his one friend

In the wide world; beside three loving hearts,
But they were far away in sweet Savoy,
In that dear valley where the child was born
And nurtured, ere he was decoyed from home.
Yet he was not forgotten: many prayers,
Taken in charge by angels, found him out
Even in the far-off land, and many tears
Stole down the dark thin cheek which lay that night
Beneath that black arch on that little house
Wherein his dear companion, his one friend,
Slept; as the child remembered whence they came,
And thought on his dear home. His tiny hand
Stole soft into the box until he found
His furry friend—his marmot, sleeping warm;
Then drew him thence and kissed him, laying him

Within his bosom, while two round salt tears
Froze on the fur. Oh! it was bitter cold.
The marmot nestled to the sobbing child,
Crying in quiet anguish till the frost
In mercy numbed his senses and he slept.

He dreamed he stood once more in sweet Savoy,
In the dear valley. There stood his old home.
His busy mother moved about the house,
And round about the old familiar door
His little sister played. As evening fell
His father brought a chamois from the Alps;
He heard again the distant cattle-bells
Wind tinkling from the Alpine pastures down,
A sweet, irregular chime. Once more he heard

Dear native music of the cattle-calls
Rising and falling, while the Alpine horn
Gave forth its clear wild notes among the hills.

The Pilgrim of the Eternal.

WHEN thou dost loose this silver cord
And break this golden bowl,
O think upon Thy promise, LORD!
And house the houseless soul.

Sent forth to range an ocean vast,
Launched on a stormy sea,
I wander through a dreary waste,
Since I came out from Thee.

As when across the heaving world
The dove was sent to go,
With baffled pinions still unfurled,
And flitted to and fro;

And as from off the waters dark
Too weary more to move,
Home to the shelter of the ark
Fluttered the way-worn dove;

So, seeking rest and finding none,
Upon this stormy sea,
Homewards, O LORD! I journey on,
Till I return to Thee.

Twilight.

THE holy day is dead,
And o'er his golden bed
The night, chief mourner, waves her sable wings,
As like the gentle dove
She mourns around her love,
And to his burial her sweet incense brings.

The choristers are mute,
Save for the mellow flute

Of some late ouzel at his evensong,
Or some sweet river hymn,
A-piping soft and dim,
The water sedge and bulrush stems among.

When Night has wedded Day,
At eve or morning gray,
The bridemaiden, sweet Twilight, thou hast been;
Brief was the marriage tie,
And thou who stood'st thereby
Dost melt in tears where this day's grave is green.

Fading Away.

SHE lay, the beautiful, the young,
In life's full morning splendour;
But o'er her face a shade was flung
Of humble sadness tender,
As if in some sweet summer's day
The shadows had descended,
And, darked with rain-clouds cold and gray,
The light and joy were ended.

With what a beautiful sad smile
The lovely lips were parted,
Though from her pleading eyes the while
The tears unbidden started.
The brave sweet soul our anxious fears
With hope was still beguiling,
But pain would wring reluctant tears
Though her pale lips were smiling.

As when in sunshine a fair flower
Has blossomed shyly peeping,
Until some sudden flying shower
Has bowed her head with weeping;
So our sweet blossom yestermorn
With all fair blooms was vying,

But stricken sore and tempest-torn
To-day she lies a-dying.

When to each friendly clasp she gave
The little hand confiding,
Within her eyes so sweet and grave
The trust shone firm abiding;
And when we spoke of coming days,
And souls that must be parted,
And weary hours and lonely ways,
She was the stronger hearted.

Undivided.

WE dwell within one mighty Tent
Above our heads unfurled;
For o'er us both GOD's love is bent
That compasses the world.

We meet each day at morn and e'en
Before GOD's Throne in prayer;
And though the great plain rolls between,
We kneel together there.

We rest beneath one Shadowing Wing
That fans our slumber deep;
For while we know not anything,
GOD smiles upon our sleep.

As o'er us bends one gentle Face
To ward our souls from harm,
We 're sheltered in one sweet embrace,
One everlasting Arm.

We look both on the self-same moon
That climbs the common sky;
The great sun smiles on both at noon,
And has us in his eye.

The wind that blowing easterly
  Doth lift thy tresses fair,
From thy sweet lips oft brings to me
  A sigh, a kiss, a prayer.

At once in Nature's page we look,
  As sitting eye to eye,
And daily read the self-same book
  Of earth, and sea, and sky.

Dear LORD! O guide us to our goal
  In Thy good time and grace,
That we who now cling soul to soul
  May yet live face to face!

The Pilgrim of Heaven.

PILGRIM of Heaven, who with the day
Thy journey dost begin,
And wrapped in mantle misty gray
Dost leave thy mountain inn;
Till glorious as I see thee stand
High on the eastern hill,
I long to compass each fair land,
And journey with thee still.

With wistful eyes I watch thee climb
The steep road toiling high;
And if, wild rising, for a time
Storms dark the azure sky,
I know that thou in heaven dost smile,
And still pursue thy way,
Though round us for a little while
This world lies cold and gray.

When jewels evening's placid breast
Her solitary star,
And thou, bright pilgrim, sink'st to rest
Behind the western bar;
A lingering splendour yet reveals
Where thou didst pass from sight,

And peace upon my spirit steals,
And whispers thee, "Good night!"

So when some dear life's setting sun
Is sinking o'er the hill,
The light of love, though day is done,
Shines warm upon us still;
And as heaven's splendour lingers yet
On mountain, sky, and plain,
It tells that those who with thee set
With thee shall rise again.

And when thy dazzling beams are laid
Across the tide at even,—
A glittering pathway silent made

Unto the gates of heaven;
As Christ did walk the heaving tide
That night in Galilee,
I pray that He still at my side
May pass the darkening sea.

Good night! good night! If in these eyes
One tear regretful quiver,
That thou perchance no more mayst rise
Or shine on them for ever;
Still through the gloom sweet Hope shall shine,
And chase the transient sorrow,
For thou, or lovelier beams than thine,
Shalt shine on me to-morrow.

Silence.

WHEN vexed by wrangling loud and rude,
Or tossed on trouble's sea,
Sweet Sister twin of Solitude,
Silence, I fly to thee!
Soothe, soothe the smart
Of my tired heart,
And through this pure still even,
These graves among,

My evensong
Shall rise ere long
To Heaven.

Then gently take me by the hand,
And through the sunset air,
O lead me to the holy land
And native hills of prayer.
Lift, lift my heart
Ere we two part,
Till, penitent and shriven,
At twilight gray
As still I pray,
I pass away
Forgiven.

O wrap me in thy holy calm
That steals at close of day,
Shed o'er my soul the sacred balm
Which falls on souls that pray.
Hush, hush my fears,
And stint my tears,
Till, having stilled my weeping,
Peace, Heaven's sweet dove,
In silent love
Shall bend above
My sleeping.

Easterly. Westerly.

EASTERLY.

MY heart is full, my eyes are dim,
My home is far away,
And round my head the sea-birds skim,
And o'er me flies the spray,
As from the stormy headland I
Look wistful out to sea;
For the storm is rising easterly
From my own dear country.

The sun he rises from the sea,
  And wheresoe'er I roam
I know the same sun shines on me
  As shines on them at home;
And the same air breathes sweetly by
  Across the heaving sea,
For the wind is blowing easterly
  From my own dear country.

WESTERLY.

This breeze that lifts my ruffling hair
  And fans my aching brow
Will soon, I know, be whispering there
  As here it whispers now;

And many a prayer and many a sigh
  Are homeward borne from me
On the wind that bloweth westerly
  Across the deep blue sea.

EASTERLY.

I seem to scent the new-mown hay,
  And in the mornings blythe
I hear across the ocean gray
  The mower whet his scythe;
For home, sweet home, it comes more nigh
  With messages for me,
When the wind is blowing easterly
  From off my own country.

And sometimes in the kindly night
I have a happy dream,
And shining clearly in my sight
My dear home still doth gleam;
And when I wake, then I know why
This dream has come to me,
For the wind is blowing easterly
Across the homeward sea.

WESTERLY.

I see the reapers homeward throng
To rest at set of sun,
I hear the happy harvest song
When harvest work is done;

I see the blessed sails that fly
  Across the narrow sea,
And feel the soft wind westerly
  Blow in my own country.

I see our cottage garden gay,
  I see the orchard green,
As if I from sweet home away
  An hour had scarcely been.
And, oh! when I do wake and cry,
  Ye winna' laugh at me,
For the wind is blowing westerly,
  Where I so fain would be.

Farewell! my tears at length are dried,
The parting hour has come,
The ship but waits the rising tide
That is to bear me home.
And now I bid ye all Good bye,
And bid God speed to me,
For the wind is hanging westerly,
And I maun put to sea.

Little Margaret.

A CHANGE has passed upon the place,
Since entering by the well-known door
Our half-expectant eyes no more
Rest on the little wistful face.

The little footsteps on the stair,
The child's glad voice about the house,
Those echoes never more shall rouse,
Which loved to laugh and linger there.

And children still shall loiter home
At evening from the village school,
But in the lane and by the pool
One footstep never more shall come.

In mercy kindly Time shall wear
The keener grief that still must be
Whene'er the brimming eyes shall see
The vacant place, the empty chair.

What though her form beneath the sod
Rests hidden from our weeping eyes?
Until the trump shall bid her rise,
She rests within the sight of GOD.

Now Hope walks hand in hand with Love,
And Faith has done her holy part;
The grief is stilled within the heart
To the soft moanings of the Dove.

And now our heart is reconciled
To Death, God's kindly messenger;
The angel bids us not to fear,
But trust the Father with His child.

In Loving Remembrance of Little Dabie.

"O MOTHER! on your bosom let me lay my aching head;
O mother! I am cold and tired, make me my little bed;
I love to rest upon your breast, dear mother, as I am,
As father gathers in his arms and folds the helpless lamb.

I see some people all in white within a garden fair,
With dance and song and music sweet, and I would
fain be there;
And there are many, many birds sit singing on the
tree;
And now I hear a gentle voice that calleth unto me.

I seem to feel upon my face the softly falling snow,
And it is cold across the fold, but I must rise and go;
I see the men that are to bear me to my little bed,
I hear the bell, whose muffled knell is tolling for the
dead.

I know I shall not live to see the blessèd Christmas
Day,

For I shall die to-morrow morn—they call my soul
away;
But, mother dear, I 'll come to you about the Christ-
mas yet,
And I shall still remember you, and you must not
forget."

* * * * *

We buried him at evening on the blessèd Christmas
Day,
The wintry storm drove whirling white, and the deep
snow round us lay;
With muffled knell the burial bell tolled through the
thickening gloom,

And faint and dim the soft sweet chime rang out his welcome Home.

All in a little, little bed we laid the child to rest,
Within his Father's garden fair and on his mother's breast.
What matter though the snow fell fast on him that Christmas even ?
'Twas but the mortal form lay there, his soul had passed to Heaven.

We thought for comfort upon Him who in the manger lay,
Cradled within the lowly stall, on that first Christmas Day ;

We knew that for that Child's sweet sake our child had passed from pain:
We knew that when the Father called our child would rise again.

The Shepherd Good in His fond arms hath folded His dear lamb:
"I will," He saith, "that those I love be with Me where I am."
And safe for ever Davie rests within that Better Land,
For no man now can pluck the child from out his Father's hand.

Bredwardine, Feb. 5th, 1879.

Honest Work.

HONEST work is always holy,
Howsoever hard and lowly.
Dread'st the laughter of a fool?
Put thyself again to school;
Learn there how our Saviour dear
Lived and worked a carpenter,
And how He in sweat of brow
Ate His bread as thou dost now.
Henceforth toil is sanctified,

We are working at His side.
Though our eyes with toil be dim,
We are labouring after Him.
In the milking of the cows,
In the sweeping of the house,
In the following of the plough,
In the lopping of the bough,
In the tending of the sheep,
There are meanings sacred, deep.
When the head and hand are weary,
When the heart is dark and dreary,
Think not thou dost work alone;
GOD is ever looking on,
Counting all the toil and cost:
Not a day is ever lost.

Live you, work you, out of ken,
From the windy praise of men,
In the humble old abode:
Every day is hid with GOD.

Ere begins the busy day
To the Father kneel and pray;
Then from morn till day grows dim,
Live, and work, and walk with Him;
Weary at the fade of light,
Ask His blessing for the night;
Sleep secure from hurtful things
Safe beneath the waving wings,
While to guard your house and store
Angels watch beside the door.

Envy not the rich, the great,
Wealthier in your low estate,
Nobler through your workful days,
Happier in your simple ways.
Well beloved of GOD must be
Holy men of low degree.

Scorn not, seeing day by day,
Flowers that bloom beside the way.
Mines of wealth are common things,
Cheerful souls are mighty kings.
Let him build a palace here,—
Heart-content, the kingmaker;
Kindly heart and busy hand,
So you have the magic wand,

And the magic word is told,

All you touch is turned to gold.

Learn the lesson taught by time:

Simple things are most sublime;

Happiest, wisest, who can see

In common things what beauties be,—

The field, the stream, the grass, the flower,

The changing lights of sun and shower,—

And find in duties daily sent

The glory of a Sacrament;

Or who have rightly understood

The golden rule of neighbourhood,—

That each may share the common load,—

How hearts are linked to hearts by GOD,—

And prove themselves the sons to be
Of Heaven-descended Charity.

As you toil up duty's steep,
Among the rocks will blossoms peep,
Which love 'mid crags and storms to blow,
More than to nestle warm below.
Uncultured, wild, it blooms no less,—
The Heaven-sown flower of happiness,
For faithful servants to afford
A sure but all-unsought reward.
Flowers there are that smile for thee
Which thy dear LORD might never see:
They sprang behind Him on the road,
Where'er His toiling footsteps trod.

The Skylark.

AGAIN thy voice is soaring high,
Thou link between the earth and sky!
And humbly listening here below
I thank my God that it is so;
For all our praises, all our prayers,
Our lifted hearts and loftier airs,
Our highest thoughts and strains, in thee
Find their expression perfectly.
And thou from us dost bear a load

Of aspirations up to GOD,
Mount through the firmament alone,
And lay them low before His throne;
Then from beyond our farthest ken
Dost bring His answer down to men.
How have I watched thee oft and long
Go up in ecstasies of song,
To where the sun on high did burn,
As if thou never wouldst return;
And, when thy form was lost to view,
Still heard the sweet song, faint but true,
The voice—the spirit of a voice,
That in the expanse did still rejoice.
And who the enraptured song that heard
But thought within the heavenly bird

An angel must imprisoned be,
Who taught such songs divine to thee,—
An archangelic minstrel given
To teach on earth the songs of Heaven?

And thou, far back in ages dim,
Wast made chief minstrel unto Him
Who sits on high; and when the dawn
Steals over mountain, wood, and lawn,
Thou at His chamber door dost wait,
And give thy hymn at Heaven's gate.
Bodiless voice of ecstasy!
I would my soul might soar with thee
Beyond these storms and strifes and cares
In sweeter and serener airs,

From earth's dark mists and troubles cease
In that bright land where all is peace,
And climb with thee the ethereal road
Up to the palace gates of GOD.

Who taught thee that steep road on high,
The trackless pathway of the sky;
Or how to sing as thou dost soar
Beyond our sight? I love thee more
Than all the birds that charm the grove
And 'mongst the green leaves tell their love.
I hear more various songs than thine,
But none so lofty, so divine;
The only voice that mounts the sky,—
The solitary voice on high,—

The only singer that was given
To teach men's songs to rise to Heaven.

Another bird may be the king,
Thou art the high priest of the Spring,
By GOD anointed, and to me
A type of immortality,
Telling how those who in cold clay
Have slept, at resurrection day
Shall rise in the Great Spring, and shriven
Shall mount, and soar, and sing in Heaven.

Lo! on the ladder of the sky,
Rising, descending, constantly,
Thou passest ever up and down;

And though robed now in sadder brown,
With inner, clearer vision, I
Still in thy form and voice descry
A glorious shape of heavenly birth,
A messenger from Heaven to earth,
Such as on Jacob's sight did gleam
Resplendent, in his lonely dream.

Ilston Rectory, 1872.

The Shepherd's Farewell.

FAREWELL! farewell, my mountain sheep,
And you, sweet lambs, adieu!
Ah! who my dear-loved flock shall keep
Now I must part from you?
Who now shall watch around the fold,
And shield the flock from harm,
Or gather on the mountains cold
The lambs within his arm?

Oft in the visions of the night
Again I tread the hill:
I see the green vale open bright,
The clear stream winding still.
Then to the fold in that dear scene
With joy do I repair;
I lead my sheep in pastures green
Beside the waters fair.

I know each sheep within the fold,
I call the lambs by name,
I lead the young, support the old,
I bear the sick and lame;
I know each dear familiar voice
Beside the mountain stream,

My heart leaps up, I so rejoice:
I wake,—and 'tis a dream.

But as I dwell in this far vale,
The self-same waters still
Do bring me many a loving tale
And message from the hill,
Where my dear sheep are wandering yet
Unpastored and alone,
For well I know they 'll ne'er forget
The shepherd who is gone.

There is a land of pastures fair
Beside a heavenly river,
A Shepherd Good who gently there

Shall feed His flock for ever;
And till we come to that blest place
Where we with Him shall dwell,
Remember me a little space,—
My mountain sheep, farewell!

Bredwardine, 1878.

The Fisherman's Daughter.

A CHILD stood by the churchyard wall,
And the wind moaned wearily,
And wistfully her tearful eyes
Looked lonely out to sea.

"Sweet child! why stand you here alone?
And why, the last of all,
So wistfully look out to sea
Beside the churchyard wall?"

"My father is a-fishing gone
Before the storm," said she,
"And every day I watch the sails
Till he comes home from sea.

"'Twas the last thing he said to me
Before he sailed away,
That I should come and watch for him
Alone here every day.

"And then he took me in his arms,
His eyes with tears were dim,
He bade me come to mother's grave,
And watch and pray for him.

"I know his boat, I know his sail,
The boat called after me,
I know our little dark red sail,
A long way out at sea.

"And when the wind began to rise,
Then I began to pray;
And came and watched by mother's grave
In the churchyard every day.

"And all the storm I watched for him
And prayed, and so I know
GOD must have taken care of him
When the wind began to blow.

"But he is five weeks fishing gone;
The neighbours look at me,
And whisper, and I wonder why
He does not come from sea."

Sweet child! you watched beside the grave
And prayed, and so we know
That GOD *has* taken care of him
Since the wind began to blow.

He found a refuge from the storm
Within a haven fair:
He will not come again to you,
But you shall meet him there.

Secure within that haven fair,
He waits till you shall go
To that tearless land and tideless sea
Where the wind shall never blow.

Primroses.

FAIR primroses, bridemaidens of the Spring,
That make the earth break forth in laughter sweet,
When in the circle of her journeying
Your blossoms pure are strewn before the feet
Of March, the childhood of the year to greet
With myriad eyes that welcome Spring again,
Chiding her long delay in the sweet south;
But while her penitential tears do rain,

Ye make her smile with kissing her sweet mouth,
And looks from those fond eyes she aye doth love to meet.

Ye seem the clear thoughts of the pure in heart,
Delicate, pure as blossoms of the snow,
Yet tinged with faint sweet colours that impart
A warmer beauty to these flowers that blow
In this our earthly Paradise below.
For there are flowers that seem too coldly pure
For mortal man on them to spend great love;
And love must love ere it can long endure,
And step by step we climb to heights above,
Mounting to Heaven's gate with labouring steps and slow.

In the fair Spring mark how the starry heaven
Is overmatched by this bright starry earth,
Whose blossoms light the hours from morn till even,
While sweet birds sing together for their birth,
And all the land is merry with their mirth.
And all the flower-stars lift their eyes in love,
Singing perpetual hymns, inaudible
To man, but heard by Him who sits above,
To whose all-hearing ear this earth is full
Of inarticulate praise, and songs of heavenly worth.

By night and day those accents pure uprise,
Bearing sweet incense of unfeignéd prayer,
As upward those fair blossoms lift their eyes,
Fulfilling with pure worship the whole air.

They on their Maker cast their simple care,
Trusting Him for the sunshine and the rain,
And He on them doth bend a loving smile,
Bidding them after storms to ope again
Their eyes, and gladden in the sun awhile,
And see in storm and shine His goodness everywhere.

And when their time of blossoming is o'er
Must these fair flowers forgotten fall and die?
They do not die, they sleep: it is no more
Than slumber deep closing a wakeful eye
And ear to winter tempests raging high.
The sleepers at the morn shall rise again
In the great Resurrection of the Spring,
The children of the sunshine and the rain,

And from their Mother Earth sweet tidings bring
Safe in whose sheltering breast they long did slumbering lie.

So let thy life be ever sweet and pure,
Submissive, thankful for what GOD shall send;
Pray without ceasing, let thy faith endure
Through cloud and storm, and trust unto the end
The love of thine Almighty Heavenly Friend.
At lauds and evensong O lift thine eye;
On Him who careth for thee cast thy care;
And when His time is come for thee to die,
Let resignation sweeten all thy prayer,
And soon the Eternal Spring shall o'er thy waking bend.

To Snowdrops.

SWEET silent preachers from God's text
That bids man lowly be,
And find his highest ornament
In his humility!
Ye grow,
Your pure heads hanging low,
Earth-bent,
Hiding your faces fair,

Though your bright souls have ne'er been vext
By sinful thought or care.

Preaching ye practise as ye blow,
And with sweet trustful grace,
Vestured in pure humility,
Smile in stern Winter's face.
Pray, pray,
At peep and shut of day,
That we
When Death shall call us hence,
With childlike trust may smiling go,
And lowly penitence.

Rhayader, 1877.

The Solitary Daffodil.

SWEET solitary daffodil!
I see thy beauty shining far
In the wide heaven of this green hill,
As lonely as the evening star.

Whither be thy bright kindred gone?
Thy lovely sisters, where are they,
That thou art left to shine alone,
A morning star at break of day?

Though left upon this windy place
To blow unsheltered, friendless, still
Thou hast a brave, sweet, smiling face
For every storm that sweeps the hill.

If, bending low before the storm,
Thy head hangs heavy with the rain,
When from the cloud the sun shines warm,
Thou lift'st thy fair bright face again.

Undaunted to thy lonely post
A soldier's honour thou dost bring,
Picketed by the coming host
Of flowers, the sentinel of Spring.

In stormy days I still shall see
Thy bright flower blowing on the hill,
And learn a lesson brave from thee,
Sweet solitary daffodil!

Clyro Mill.

THE western wind blew wild and chill,
There came a sound of distant rain,
As loitering down the winding lane
We passed above the bustling mill;

Along the willow-shaded pond,
Between the wheel and water-grate,
And through the swinging wicket-gate,
To sunny fields that slope beyond;

Down to a way-worn mouldering stile,
And path that skirts the headland edge,
Beneath a hollow eldern hedge;
And as the sun broke to a smile,

We paused upon a rising hill,
To mark the windings of a brook,
And all the air around us shook
With throbbings of the booming mill.

Dulas Water.

O DULAS Water! ceaselessly
For seven sweet years my lullaby!
My life, my love, my footsteps free
For seven sweet years have been by thee;
And as life stole from year to year,
Thy voice still more I loved to hear;
Whether with storms thy roar was high,
Or when thou softly murmuredst by
With summer night's melodious tones,

And gentle clink amongst thy stones.
How often I when sheltered warm
From driving rain and howling storm
Have listened from the lighted book
To hear the roaring of the brook;
And as it thundered rising still,
It brought a message from the hill
Of torrent rains and tempest wild.
But when thy waters dimpling smiled
Adown the Cwm some sweet spring day,
Fern-fringed, flower-lighted on their way
By primrose stars that shone on thee,
And many a wood anemone;
How have I watched on the green breast
Of orchards sloping to the west,

In sister groups about the hills
The yellow-coated daffodils,
Through all the bright March afternoon
Dance nodding to thy rippling tune.

On Sunday morns the church bells shook
Sweet music o'er the murmuring brook
That flowed in chime, and from the hill
The parish folk came wending still
Churchwards from many a mountain ridge,
And loitered leaning on the bridge
To talk, before the dropping chime
Gave warning of the service time.
And ere had ceased the parson's bell
A silence in the village fell,

For all the churchyard path had trod,
And gathering kneeled to worship GOD;
And the sole sound the air that shook,
Was the sweet tinkle of the brook.

Sweet Dulas Water! oh, let me
Still by thy banks remembered be,
And keep yet as thy grasses green
The love for me that once has been.
And if 'tis given to me once more
To tread thy well-remembered shore,
May I not wander there unknown,
But find a hand to clasp my own,
A voice of welcome, gladdening eyes,
And kindly smiles or kindlier sighs.

But oh! meanwhile, sweet stream, by thee
May many a prayer arise for me;
May kind thoughts—wishes that in heaven
Are counted prayers—at morn or even
From those worn water-steps below
The mountain ash, still heavenward go
For him who exiled far away
For his dear friends doth ever pray.

The Rocks of Aber Edw.

EXILED, in distant lands I seem
Happy once more to walk in dream
Through sweeping cloud and sunny gleam,
By moor and vale and lake and stream,
To the Rocks of Aber Edw.

I listen in my dream until
I hear the plover whistle shrill

Beside the green track o'er the hill,
By which I seem to journey still
To the Rocks of Aber Edw.

The coot sends up his mournful cry
From where the silver lake doth lie,
Bright mirror to the hills and sky,
And o'er the moor the track sweeps by
To the Rocks of Aber Edw.

The sweet wind freshens o'er the moor,
God's breath alike for rich and poor,
And from the west still blowing pure
The mountain wind my steps doth lure
To the Rocks of Aber Edw.

Across the great moor's purple bloom
How sweetly steals the sweet perfume!
And far below I see the gloom
Where thick woods wave their rustling plume
O'er the Rocks of Aber Edw.

I see the green hill's ferny steep,
The heather moor's encircling sweep
Slope dotted white with mountain sheep,
And in its bosom seem to sleep
The Rocks of Aber Edw.

And there lies hid the famous cave,
And down the gorge the green woods wave
And 'neath the cliff walls towering brave

I hear the flashing river rave
Through the Rocks of Aber Edw.

And murmur through my dream until
The merry children's laughter shrill
Brings back that dear remembrance still,
Our happy day upon the hill
'Midst the Rocks of Aber Edw.

Oh! may once more these pilgrim feet
Tread those dear hills, these eyes still greet
Love-yearning those twin valleys sweet,
Within whose breast the waters meet
By the Rocks of Aber Edw.

Langley Burrell Rectory, September, 1874.

Easter Sunday Evening

IN THE MILL LANE, CLYRO, 1865.

UPON the ceasing of the rain,
This Easter Sunday even,
I loiter down my favourite lane
Alone, and muse of Heaven.

Along the willow-shaded pool,
Around the mossy hatches,
The primroses blow dewy cool
In starry clumps and patches.

The gray ducks row the ripples clear
Against the willows lipping,
And from the silent wheel I hear
The water slowly dripping.

Upon the milldam's mouldering hatch,
Beneath a willow sitting,
The baffled water's glance I catch
Adown the waste brook flitting.

So swiftly runs our life away,
So fleet our glory passes,
Though we might flourish yesterday
As green as water-grasses.

The river runs to join the sea,
  The brook to meet the river;
Man to his sepulchre, and he
  By far the fastest driver.

The water yet comes back in rain,
  A ceaseless round returning;
But when or whence shall we again
  Come back, for all our yearning?

THOU, who hast solved the mystery dread
  Our human life o'erlying,
Grant me, as I Thy footsteps tread,
  To find no death in dying.

The Church Path.

LANGLEY BURRELL.

A HOLY sound is in the air,
A message from the sacred bell
Floats softly o'er the fields to tell
The village of the hour of prayer.

The parting sun has shed a smile
On broad elms and bright lattermath;
Beneath the elms the churchyard path
Slopes to the immemorial stile,

Whereby the little village folks
At noon and eve may still be seen
To loiter up the Bowling Green,
And past the twin memorial oaks.

And where their childish footsteps trod
Between the school and cottage home,
The village fathers duly come
By the same path to worship GOD.

Advent.

OFT in the Advent night
I think of Thee,
And then Thou com'st in dreams,
Dear LORD! to me.

I hear the faint cock-crow
From farm to farm,
And then I watch and pray
For help from harm.

I see the winter dawn
  Break o'er the hill;
LORD! stay my soul on Thee
  As calm and still.

On one red lingering leaf
  The sun has shone;
Let Thy Face shine on me
  When left alone.

The morning wind blows sweet
  On tower and tree;
So let Thy Spirit flow,
  Dear LORD! on me.

I hear the wakening birds
  At their sweet laud;
So let my rising heart
  Sing praise to GOD.

Now doth the sad wood-dove
  Her plaint begin;
So doth my mourning heart
  Deplore her sin.

And day and night pass on
  In order still;
So order all my life
  To do Thy will.

LORD! lead me as Thy child
Both night and day,
And help me for Thy Face
To watch and pray.

The Dying Warrior.

A SMILE broke o'er the warrior's face,
He raised his dying head;
The faithful sense revived to trace
His Captain's coming tread.
Listening for that dear sound he strove
To still his labouring breath,
And in his eyes the light of love
Blazed through the films of death.

The Captain stood beside the couch,
And spake one loving word;
The soldier felt that gentle touch,
He knew it was his Lord.
The voice was sweet, more tender yet
The hand upon his brow,—
"Warrior, well done! the fight is won,
And *I* will tend *thee* now."

The Prodigal Son.

I WILL arise, and to my Father's house
With faltering steps will humbly seek my way,
If He may hear my penitential vows,
I will arise and pray.

What if I shiver in the wintry wind?
What if my silken robe to rags is come?
My face is set, I will not look behind,
For I am travelling home.

I do remember when I left my home
How broad and pleasant seemed the downward way,
How distant ruin, sickness, and the tomb:
No thought had I to pray.

For I was long in a delirious dream,
So close the poisonous fumes clung round my head,
And when the morning wind had scattered them
I rose as one long dead.

My Father's servants all have bread to spare,
My Father's children all His kindness learn;
And still the Prodigal may have a share,
If he will but return.

If he will wander back to the old home,
The hospitable door stands open wide;
And many wonder why he does not come,
Or where does he abide.

But there is One that ever looks abroad,
As when a long expected guest may come,
If His dear son should yet be on the road,
Should yet be travelling home.

For He has thought upon his absent one
Morning and evening since he went away,
And through each winter's snow and summer's sun
Mourned for him every day.

I am not worthy, oh! I am not meet
His own dear son to be accounted more,
But to abase myself before His feet,
And beg at His wide door,—

If He will send me into His fair fields,
Sowing His seed before the early rain,
Or bid me gather in the generous yields,
And reap the golden grain.

I will return unto my Father's breast,
And in His arms thereon sob out my sin,
And I will nevermore forsake His rest
When I have entered in.

* * * *

I did arise, and to my Father's door
With humble steps at last did faltering come;
My Father clasps me in His arms once more:
And this is coming Home!

To some Little Friends at Aberystwyth.

DEAR children, never think that though your friend is far away,
He 'll e'er forget his little friends at Aberystwyth Bay;
For oft he thinks of them, and hopes that they remember still
The happy evenings spent with him upon the Castle Hill.

Do you remember that fair eve, the first that e'er we
met
On the green Castle Hill, what time the sun had well-
nigh set,
When the tide was coming in, and the evening air
blew cool
Upon the fair young limbs fresh bathed within the
"Maiden's Pool"?

Have you forgotten how it was that first our friendship
grew,—
The merry play, the winning way, that drew my heart
to you?
How little then we ever dreamed our friendship was
to be

Love, that should hallow each fair scene beside that
western sea.

It fell on sweet St. Peter's eve—it seems but yesterday,
That I sat looking out with you upon the heaving
bay,
And saw the foam-fringed blue waves roll across the
harbour bar,
And watched the angel of the west light up the even-
ing star.

Oft when I sit alone and watch the sunset on the
hill,
Around me clear I seem to hear your merry voices
still

Blend with the sailors' distant hail, the slight and ceaseless roar
With which the green waves curling plunge along the shingle shore.

I would not have my children sad with sorrowful regret,
Nor would I they should careless grow and ready to forget;
So, sometimes in your evening games, and always when you pray,
Remember him who loves you well, who now is far away.

If e'er our dear familiar haunts seem empty and alone,
If ever from the hill you feel one loving presence gone,

Be sure you too are sadly missed, and that life's sun
must set,
And death's night close around your friend, before he 'll
you forget.

Dear children, yet another word : be merry and be wise,
And ne'er let storms of passion cloud the love-light
in your eyes ;
Let simple childlike prayer each morn and eve go up
to Heaven ;
Love one another, and forgive as you would be forgiven.

My little playfellows, farewell ! but let me hear of you,
That you still grow more sweet and pure, and kind,
and brave, and true.

'T will make me oh! so glad to know that you remember still
The gentle lessons you have learned on Aberystwyth Hill.

Rhayader, July, 1877.

The Llanybwlch Beach.

ON thine Aber, sweet Ystwyth, my blessing shall be,
And my love shall abide by the Cardigan sea;
For my heart lingers fondly to dwell evermore
In the hearts of the children of Cardigan shore.

Farewell, ah, farewell! as I wander alone
I shall fondly remember the days that are gone,
All the haunts so familiar, so dear to me still,—
The castle, the shore, and the green sloping hill.

There are green hills in Heaven where yet we may meet,
And my children may still gather there at my feet;
And oh! for the shores of that crystalline sea,
Where these sorrowful partings no longer shall be.

There 's a castle in Heaven where foes cannot come,
And the Great Castle-Warder shall welcome us home;
And on those green slopes we shall rest evermore,
And smile at the sorrows that tossed us ashore.

On the bridge of the Ystwyth we stood one sweet even,
And the tide was at flood, and the glow was in heaven,
But a star twinkled faint o'er the dark castle tower,
And the clock o'er the harbour was striking the hour.

On the Tanybwlch beach we had kindled our fire,
And the children's bright laughter rose merrily higher,
While the sweet broken English and Welsh mingled fair,
And Lizzie was Queen of the revellers there.

I read them a story, they clustered to me,
A round soft cheek pressed to each shoulder to see
"Little Dot" in the picture, and ere the sun set
Their voices were hushed, and their eyelashes wet.

Ere we parted that evening a promise was given
(For we all felt the better and nearer to Heaven)
To pray that sweet prayer made in ages ago:
"LORD, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow!"

Our dear gipsy fire is now scattered and cold,
And the sun lights no longer those tresses of gold;
But I still pray the prayer of those ages ago:
"LORD, wash them and they shall be whiter than snow!"

Aberystwyth, July 30th, 1878.

The Fisherman.

OUT of the town, out of the town,
A fishing boat sailed as the sun went down.

A woman's hand was shading her eyes,
And a woman's heart was heavy with sighs.

And the children splashing fair limbs in the foam,
Shouted "Farewell," and ran laughing home.

Over the bar, over the bar,

A fishing boat heaved 'neath the evening star.

The land grew dim, and the night was fair,

And the fisherman breathed his evening prayer.

He thought of his wife and children three,

And the smile on his face was good to see.

Into the town, into the town,

A fishing boat drifted upside down.

A fisherman's wife sat still and lone,

And the heart in her breast was turned to stone.

And three children cried and pulled at her dress;
But they knew not yet they were fatherless.

Toll the bell, toll the bell,
Over the sea for a fisherman's knell.

The minute-bell began to toll,
And the people prayed for a passing soul.

But the fisherman's soul had passed, to be
At rest in the land beyond the sea.

Safe in port, safe in port!
The land was near, and the voyage short.

Though tears may stream and hearts may yearn,
The name of that port is "No Return."

But the fisherman's wife and children three
Shall sail to that land beyond the sea.

Aberystwyth, July, 1877.

The Sleep of Annie Hargest.

DROWNED IN LLANGORSE LAKE, 8th JULY, 1878.

FROM green Cathedine's mountain steep,
Beyond the hill-side's emerald sweep,
I see the lake's blue water deep,
Where Annie Hargest sank to sleep,
That summer evening suddenly.

Within the heaving fisher-boat,
Across the lake she longed to float

To some mysterious shore remote,
Golden with barley, wheat, or oat,
By Llyn Safaddan waving free.

So she launched forth upon the mere,
That little lonely voyager;
And, as she drifted without fear,
Her playmates watched her with a cheer,
And she cheered back right merrily.

Without an oar, without a sail,
Without a tide, without a gale,
Without a tear, without a wail,
She floated o'er the waters pale,
Down to the dark and dreamless sea.

Across the heaving waters gray
She saw her dear home far away;
She thought she could, ere close of day,
Through the lake water make her way
Home to the shore so easily.

* * * *

In the soft lapping of the lake
The sedge a quiet song doth wake,
And, for the little mariner's sake,
The coot his note doth plaintive make
On Llyn Safaddan mournfully.

Her earthly troubles now are done,
The voyage past, the shore is won;

Beyond the setting of the sun
Her perfect rest is now begun
Within the country heavenly.

With many a sob, and tear, and prayer,
They laid her in "God's Acre" fair;
But Annie Hargest is not there,
For she to her sweet native air
Has gone—God called her lovingly.

Bredwardine, October 29th, 1878.

The Welcome Home.

[At Bredwardine the chime of three bells after a funeral is called "The Welcome Home."]

WELCOME home! Thy bed is made,
Freshly strewn with early flowers
Underneath this yew-tree's shade,
Green with myriad suns and showers.
Welcome home!

Welcome home! Above thy head
Murmuring sighs the dark yew still,

And upon thy quiet bed
Softly sleeps the daffodil.
Welcome home!

Welcome home! No longer fear
Evil words nor slanderous tongue;
For the birds but carol here
Peacefully their evensong.
Welcome home!

Welcome home! The sweet bell's chime,
As we lay thee to thy sleep,
Softly dropping each in time,
Will not vex thy slumber deep.
Welcome home!

Welcome home! Thy haven won,
Safe within the harbour bar,
All thy tempests now are done,
Calmly shines the even star.
Welcome home!

Welcome home! Among thy kin
Thou art come at length to bide,
And thy mother's arms within,
Brother, sister, side by side.
Welcome home!

"Welcome Home!" the angels sang,
"Open stands thy palace door."
"Welcome Home," Heaven's portals rang:

"Thou art safe for evermore.

"Welcome Home!"

"Welcome Home!" the Saviour smiled,

"Welcome Home!" the Dove replied,

And the Father bade His child,

Now redeemed and sanctified,

"Welcome Home!"

Bredwardine Vicarage, February, 1878.

The Harbour.

SILENT beneath the evening star
At last where she would be,
The ship within the harbour bar
Sleeps on the waveless sea;
The stormy voyage now is done,
The haven rest has now begun.

But not unscathed to havens fair
That bark was tempest tost;

For lo! the marks of storm are there,
Strained timbers, rudder lost;
And many a wave has whelmed the deck,
And many a gale has threatened wreck.

Yet when beneath the shipwright's care
The sheltered bark has lain,
She from the port shall issue fair,
And walk the waves again;
And lovelier now than e'er before
Shall spread her wings for some bright shore.

So, when beneath the stress of life
These human barks are driven,
And voyaging through storm and strife

Direct their course to Heaven,
They find a bar to break the wave,—
A harbour in the quiet grave.

Secure within that harbour bar
We lie and rest awhile,
And on our sleep the evening star
Shines with a quiet smile,
Where the green wave just heaves to bear
Memorial of our sepulchre.

But soon from out that haven deep,
Refitted, we shall sail,
And spread our wings unfurled from sleep
To catch the heavenward gale,

For that new life and tideless sea

Where storm and strife no more shall be.

E. C. Alden, Bocardo Printing Works, Oxford.